



Illinois FC

"Sportsmanship, Character, Development"

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US Soccer Mandates- Changes ahead

As many of you have heard, some changes are ahead for the club due to two recent mandates from U.S. Soccer, the national governing body for youth, amateur, and professional soccer in the United States. One change will affect the sizes of the fields our younger ages play on and the size of their teams while the other will change the way we break up our players by age.

We realize there will be challenges ahead. These changes are being made by US Soccer in an effort to improve player development and standardize some of what Americans do with the rest of the soccer-playing world.

Our state governing body, the Illinois Youth Soccer Association (IYSA), and our local league, the Central Illinois Youth Soccer League (CIYSL), are adopting these changes for the 2016-2017 season, so Illinois FC will do the same.

We as a club must do our best to navigate this process. We will be transparent about these changes and how they will affect our teams, and will be happy to discuss any questions or concerns that parents have. We appreciate your understanding.

In the meantime, please read through all of what follows. The links provide more detailed explanations of each initiative.

[US Soccer Mandates link](#)

[US Youth Soccer link](#)

Change 1 -- Small-Sided Games

At younger ages, US Soccer is calling for fewer players on the field at a time so each player sees more of the ball and is a more integral part of what the team is doing. Field sizes are also being reduced to help players learn at younger ages to play in tight spaces rather than to rely on kick-and-run soccer. The new standards:

U6-U8: 4v4, no goal keeper, 30 x 20 yards

U9-U10: 7v7, includes goal keeper, 47 x 30 yards

U11-U12: 9v9, includes goal keeper, 75 x 47 yards

U13 & Up: 11v11, includes goal keeper, 112 x 75 yards

[Small-Sided Games FAQ link](#)

[Small-Sided Games Standard Chart link](#)

Change 2 -- Birth Year Registration

US Youth Soccer will begin using calendar years rather than school years to divide teams, following the practice of most if not all of the rest of the soccer world.

The age groups we will use, starting with the 2016-2017 season:

U9: Born in 2008

U13: Born in 2004

U17: Born in 2000

U10: Born in 2007

U14: Born in 2003

U18: Born in 1999

U11: Born in 2006

U15: Born in 2002

U19: Born in 1998

U12: Born in 2005

U16: Born in 2001

[Birth Year FAQ link](#)

[Birth Year Age Matrix link](#)

How will these changes affect our club?

There will be no changes to teams during the Spring 2016. All changes will take effect starting with tryouts in June for the 2016-2017 season.

Small Sided Games

Our club already plays small-sided games for the youngest age groups. This mandate will change the numbers slightly, but will not have a drastic impact on team formation. It will help standardize team and field sizes from one club to the next, which will make it easier for our teams when they travel to other states or other parts of Illinois.

The Champaign Park District is also adopting the new team and field-size changes for the Park District Program, so the fields we use at Dodds Park will match the new field sizes beginning Spring 2016 (the team sizes will remain the same for the spring season- U9: 6v6, U10-U11: 8v8, U12: 9v9, U13 & Up: 11v11).

Birth Year Registration

Currently, our club uses the school-year calendar to divide players into age groups. We will change to the calendar year beginning with the 2016-2017 season tryouts. This will have a greater impact on our club, as follows:

Will we be able to keep our current teams?

No. This is the biggest change ahead. As always, players will be reevaluated and placed on teams during tryouts. But starting with this summer's tryouts, players on a given team will be born in the same calendar year as indicated by the earlier chart.

Can my son or daughter "play up" with friends?

No. As always, each player must try out at his or her own age group. In rare cases, a player may be moved up an age group based on coach evaluations. As we have done in the past there will likely be times when we combine age groups based on number of players and player skill level; we have done this in the past on the girls side and at the U13-U14 or high school age groups.

My player will be an 8th grader next year and was born in 2002, will he or she have a team to play on?

Yes, we will have a team for them to play on year-round. The oldest year-round age bracket for leagues and tournaments will switch from U14 as it is currently to U15 for the 2016-2017 season. We will have two options for 8th graders born in 2002:

1. Form a complete team of 8th graders born in 2002.
2. Combine the 8th graders born in 2002 with the 2003 players and form combo U14-U15 teams.

The decision about which option to choose will be made by the Illinois FC coaching staff after tryouts, based on the number of players in each age group and the skill level of those players. We do NOT plan on combining the 8th graders born in 2002 with high school freshmen born in 2002. Freshman born in 2002 will try out and play with other high school players.

My player will be a HS senior next year and was born in 1998, will he or she have a team to play on?

Yes. The oldest age bracket will switch from the current U18 to U19 for the 2016-2017 season. Currently, many leagues and tournaments offer a U19 bracket for so-called "trapped" high school seniors, those who are too old for U18. Starting in 2016-2017, many leagues and tournaments will offer a U20 bracket for these players.

Why did US Soccer make the birth year age-group changes?

Please read the US Soccer statement [here](#). The two main reasons we have heard for this change is to align ourselves with the rest of the world and how they form teams, as well as to make it less complicated during the team formation process to know which players belong to which age group.